

DRIVING IN THE RAIN

poem by Christopher Shipman



Image: "Blueprint of a Dream" by Jaundré van Breda. "Driving in the Rain" was written by Christopher for *Rattle*'s Ekphrastic Challenge, July 2022, and selected as the Editor's Choice.

Fun fact: during a thunderstorm more raindrops fall than there are people in the world. You can look it up. I'll wait. Go ahead. But I won't bother. My eight-year-old daughter— everything she says deserves to be believed. Besides, I'm driving. It's all true anyway. Oz is over the rainbow. Just listen to the tautology of water. Just look at the summertime street—how it stretches its torrid tongue beneath us. A ghostly heat up ahead flails infinite arms. We watch the rain fall, offering platitudes in torrents. She says Blue Bird (our Prius) can handle it. I know the small human in back who says it can handle it. The way she takes in the sky over Benjamin Parkway—I'd call it a bruise and be done with it. She uses the opportunity to remind me that girls see more shades of color than boys. Now she insists it's her favorite shade of purple. This sky the same she used for a surreal sketch of her mama's face before we left the house. Now she dangles a bracelet made with a friend—late birthday present. The purple meretricious gems. The fake feather barely hanging on even with the windows up. And just like that, she grows taciturn, silent as the drenched blur of trees scrolling by. I try not to, but I wonder if she sees in her reflection a semblance of how fractured we all end up. How momentarily whole. How we spread ourselves thin as we go. Raindrops